



# Preventing Early Expulsion

Jill Hoiting, Supporting Families Together Association

Lana Nenide, Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

Dr. Katherine Magnuson, UW-Madison, School of Social Work

Dr. Christine Neddenriep, UW-Whitewater, Psychology Department

Abbe Braun, Supporting Families Together Association

Jason Rahn, WI Department of Children and Families

Dotty Lillo, Child Care Partnership

Terri Alexander, 4C for Children

# What is early expulsion?

- Early expulsion occurs when a child and family is asked or made to leave an early education setting for reasons other than inability to pay for services
- Early expulsion occurs among children zero to five
- Early expulsion perpetuates challenging behaviors which can lead to many negative outcomes over time

# What does it look like?

- Early expulsion impacts some groups of children more than others:
  - African American children
  - Boys
  - Children of families enrolled in WI Shares
  - Children with special needs

What do  
early  
educators  
have to  
say about  
it?



# Preventing Early Expulsion

**Problem:** High and disparate rates of expulsion in early education perpetuate challenging behaviors, which if not addressed, can lead to an increased likelihood of experiencing academic failure, grade retention, negative school attitudes, dropping out of high school and incarceration.

## Current Context:

- Demonstrated results in Arkansas
- Readiness for change at early educator and policy levels
- Strong relationships within existing systems and collaborations
- Community-based organizations as trusted brokers and providers of services
- Access to national and peer expertise
- Representation of Wisconsin's geographic diversity

## Strategies: Implement an effective, tiered model of support for children, families and early educators

- Adapt and refine Arkansas' model using family and early educator input to drive implementation and continuous improvement
- Train teams at community organizations in the adapted model
- Solidify commitments from early educators to not expel a child without accessing supports through the model
- Triage needs, determining whether onsite coaching or infant mental health consultation will be provided
- Provide onsite coaching using the Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence
- Provide Infant Mental Health Consultation (IMHC)
- Disseminate findings to key stakeholders and decisionmakers

### Outcomes for Children and Families

#### Short Term

1. Families use the triage helpline
2. Families engage more with early educators and are confident in their interactions

#### Intermediate

1. Children exhibit increased social emotional skills and fewer challenging behaviors
2. Children and families are less likely to experience expulsion

### Outcomes for Early Educators

#### Short Term

1. Early educators use the triage helpline
2. Early educators utilize onsite quality coaching and IMHC

#### Intermediate

1. Early educators increase use of effective strategies to support social emotional development and manage challenging behaviors
2. Early educators are less likely to expel children

### Outcomes for Systems and Policy Change

#### Short Term

1. Referral Specialists, Quality Coaches and Infant Mental Health Consultants implement the collaborative model

#### Intermediate

1. Key stakeholder groups, including the Governor's Council and the Department of Children and Families' expulsion workgroup support sustaining and expanding the model
2. Existing approaches that leverage Child Care Development Funds, Medicaid and private health insurance are adapted to develop a sustainable model of funding
3. Key decision makers are educated about the model, process and outcomes to create change

## Long-Term Goals in Preventing Expulsion in Early Childhood Settings:

- **Health Equity:** Reduce overall expulsion and eliminate disparities in expulsion rates for children 0-5 years
- **Innovation:** Adapt and implement a successful existing model to reduce expulsion in early childhood and improve young children's social emotional skills
- **Capacity Building:** Increase understanding, skills, and abilities of families and early educators to support optimal development of children 0-5 years and drive policy for the field of early education
- **Systems Change:** Transform the field of early education's approach to challenging behaviors with increased supports and skills. Develop a new state-level policy that is well-informed and well-funded to support statewide implementation

# Long-term Goals in Preventing Expulsion in Early Childhood Settings

1

## Health Equity

Reduce overall expulsion and eliminate disparities in expulsion rates for children 0-5 years

2

## Innovation

Adapt and implement a successful existing model to reduce expulsion in early childhood and improve young children's social emotional skills

3

## Capacity Building

Increase understanding, skills, and abilities of families and early educators to support optimal development of children 0-5 years and drive policy for the field of early education

4

## Systems Change

Transform how the field of early education approaches challenging behaviors through increased supports and skills and develop a new state-level policy that is well-informed and funded to support statewide implementation

# The Current Context and Our Preconditions



**Demonstrated results in  
Arkansas**



**Readiness for change at early  
educator and policy levels**



**Strong relationships within  
existing systems and  
collaborations**



**Community-based organizations  
that are trusted brokers and  
providers of services**



**Access to national and peer  
expertise**



**Representation of Wisconsin's  
geographic diversity**

# Important Assumptions

## About Expulsion

- Expulsion involves a triad:
  - the child
  - the family
  - the early educator
- Expulsion is the result of an adult's response to a child's behavior and the decisions that an adult makes

## About Change

- Coaching and IMHC develop skills in adults and children, raise awareness of implicit bias, and positively impact interactions and environments
- Changes in skills, awareness, interactions and environments result in adults responding differently to a child's behaviors and making different decisions accordingly
- A different decision means young children are not expelled

# Our Process & Strategies

## Planning and Preparation

- Adapt and refine Arkansas' model using initial and ongoing family and early educator input
- Train teams at community-based organizations in the adapted model
- Solidify commitments from early educators to not expel a child without accessing supports through the model



## Implementation

- Triage needs, determining whether onsite coaching or infant mental health consultation will be provided
- Onsite coaching using the Pyramid Model of Social Emotional Competence strategies
- Provide Infant Mental Health Consultation (IMHC) with supported family engagement



## Sustainability

- Disseminate findings to key decision-makers and key stakeholders, including the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council and the WI Department of Children and Families' Expulsion Workgroup
- Evaluate funding approaches utilized, including Child Care Development Block Grant, Medicaid and private health insurance

**What  
makes the  
model?**



**Triage  
Helpline**



**Onsite  
Coaching**



**Infant  
Mental  
Health  
Consultation**

# Formative Evaluation

## **Data will be used during implementation for continuous improvement**

- The adaptation of the model will be informed by input from families and early educators facilitated through Child Care Resource & Referral
- By tracking case data in a comprehensive data management system, the evaluation will know who is using the triage system, what services are being received, and whether the program is having the scope, reach and “usability” that is expected
- By conducting focus groups, we will know how families and early educators experience the triage, onsite coaching, and IMHC, and whether they report changes in their behaviors as a result

# Summative Evaluation

## **Data will be used to see if the program is having the desired outcomes**

- Case specific information about whether the child remained in the program
- Third administration of statewide survey on use of expulsion (with oversampling in project regions)
- Family and early educator “exit” surveys about their experiences with triage, onsite coaching and IMHC
- Early educators will be asked about their knowledge of their implicit biases
- IMH Consultant will complete a standardized assessment of the child’s behavior when services start and when they are completed (BASC-3 BESS)
- Coaches and IMH Consultants will observe the classroom using a standardized tool that captures behavior management practices when services start and when they are completed (TPOT)
- Reports will be disseminated to policymakers and key stakeholders and the model is supported in a sustainable way

## What is changing...

- 1) Changes in the provision of state and community supports for parents and early educators who care for children with challenging behaviors
- 2) Programs, early educators, and parents responses to children's challenging behavior that often can lead to expulsion
- 3) And as a result of their changed responses, changes in children's challenging behaviors

## How much change?

- 1) Prior research suggests we can drastically reduce expulsion and improve behavior management in homes and early education settings using this model
- 2) Other states have implemented this approach statewide using sustainable and available funding streams
- 3) How much better will children behave after services is less clear...

## What is the minimum evidence to show it works?

- 1) Implementation: Programs and parents use the services, and report satisfaction with the services
- 2) Outcome: Children do not leave the early education setting, focus groups provide positive narratives about stakeholder experiences, key policymakers express enthusiasm for adopting the model statewide

# Our Theory of Change in Summary

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Early expulsion is an issue that perpetuates challenging behaviors and can lead to negative outcomes for young children, especially African American boys.

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Adapting the effective model utilized in Arkansas allows us to be responsive to the readiness for change in practice among early educators and the readiness for change in policy at the state level.

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Implementing the model to provide customized and tiered supports for early educators, families and young children, we will increase skills and strategies among early educators, families and children.

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Increasing the capacity of early educators, families and children will reduce expulsion rates and their associated disparities.

# WPP is the ideal funder for this work



WITH YOUNG CHILDREN BEING EXPELLED AT DISPARATE RATES IN WISCONSIN, IF WE DO NOT MAKE A CHANGE, WE WILL FACE INCREASED CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY.



WE ARE TAKING RESEARCH AND APPLYING IT IN WISCONSIN COMMUNITIES AT THE MOST IMPACTFUL TIME OF A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT.



THE TIME IS RIGHT. EARLY EDUCATORS ARE READY FOR A SOLUTION AND THE STATE OF WISCONSIN IS COMMITTED TO CREATING AN EXPULSION POLICY. THIS WORK PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE PRACTICE AND POLICY IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

# Questions & Answers Section